

Parks staff provides the following comments and recommendations on the proposed Atwood Avenue reconstruction from Fair Oaks Ave to Cottage Grove Rd:

1. Bike path from Lakeview Avenue to Atwood Avenue

The proposed bike path through the park would result in two new sections of paved path in the park, additional width to the existing paved path and introduce thru traffic to an area of the park that does not currently experience thru bike traffic.

Building a bike path along a more direct route along Lakeview Ave to the connection to Atwood would reduce the amount of pavement in the park and keep the commuter bike traffic out of the center of the park. It would also provide a more direct route for bikers whose destination is not Olbrich Park. For those whose destination is the area west of Starkweather Creek in Olbrich Park, the existing path will remain open to their use. City Engineering should consider a 10 wide bike path along the old Lakeview Ave alignment, along the east side of the proposed parking lot to Atwood Ave, instead of the bike path alignment as shown.

2. Bike and pedestrian facilities along the south side of Atwood Avenue

2.a) South side parallel parking (approx. 40 stalls): The parallel parking along Atwood Avenue's south side, and the bike path immediately adjacent to it, creates the potential for conflict between people disembarking from their cars and on-coming bicyclists. Removing the three parking lane bays on the south side of Atwood would remove the potential for conflict, reduce the amount of parkland needed, and potentially allow for a wider grass terrace between the bike/ped facility and the travel lane.

2.b) Location of the sidewalk south of the bike path: For pedestrians heading north to cross Atwood or use the bus stops, there are nine points of conflict between the pedestrians and the bike path along the entire route. Only one point of conflict is mitigated by placing the sidewalk south of the bike path. If the sidewalk was located on the north side of the bike path, the only conflict would be on the east end where the path crosses the sidewalk to put the bikes out on to the bike lane on Atwood Ave. Bikers entering the bike path from the north (via a crosswalk on Atwood) would need to cross the sidewalk but they will be traveling at a lower rate of speed. The downside is that pedestrians looking to enter the lake side of Olbrich Park from the sidewalk would have to cross the bike path to do so.

2.c. The bike path "dip" just west of Starkweather Creek: The pavement alignment appears to be for the purpose of making the connection to the proposed bike path loop through the park and it results in additional parkland lost to the bike/ped facility. This "dip" will not be necessary if the bike path connection to Lakeview is via the old Lakeview Ave alignment.

2.d. The sidewalk on the existing bridge: The sidewalk on the existing bridge over Starkweather Creek is no longer connected to the pedestrian way on the south side of Atwood Avenue. Consider connecting the bridge sidewalk to the sidewalk, especially if the sidewalk is moved to the north of the bike path. This would relieve congestion on the new bridge and make use of an existing facility.

3. The north side of Atwood Avenue

3.a. Bike path on north side of Atwood Avenue: This facility seems to give preference to bikers when there are a fair number of pedestrians on this side of the road. A number of visitors to the gardens use the parking lot to the east of Starkweather Creek when the lot nearer to OBG is full. The bike facility seems redundant to the one on the south side of Atwood and the Capital City Trail located along the north side of the park. A wide concrete sidewalk, which preferences pedestrians but allows biking is recommended for the north side of Atwood.

3.b. Bus stop just east of western-most driveway into Olbrich Botanical Gardens: The bus stop is currently located in the terrace between the curb and the proposed bike path. OBG is interested in improving the bus stop area by adding a park bench on the north side of the sidewalk/bike path. This will likely be a popular bus stop for garden visitors heading back downtown or to Madison's west side.

3.c. Bus stop just west of Walter Street on the north side of Atwood: A bus pull out is recommended here to take the bus out of the travel lane during peak hours.

Parks staff provides the following recommendations for consideration by the Board of Park Commissioners on the proposed Atwood Avenue reconstruction from Fair Oaks Ave to Cottage Grove Rd:

1. Relocate the bike path along Lakeview Avenue and not through the park west of Starkweather Creek.
2. Potentially eliminate the parking along the south side of Atwood Avenue, shift the sidewalk north of the bike path, and provide terrace space to separate modes of transportation.
3. Connect the sidewalk to the existing bridge on the south side of Atwood to avoid conflicts with the bike path.
4. The bike path shown on the northern side of Atwood should be a wider concrete sidewalk instead of a bikepath.
5. Provide a bus pull-out location along the north side of Atwood just west of Walter Street.